

Washington City
 Hon. Albert Gallatin, March 10th 1826.

Sir,

In attempting to comply with your request — that of giving you a short account of the Cherokee Nation, its present state of civilization and the manner of its introduction, I take the liberty ~~not~~ to observe, that in the absence of chronology — official papers of my Nation, and at a distance from ~~my~~ it, where I least expected to undertake an object of this kind, my observations will be confined to facts that have transpired within my own knowledge, except so far as relates to the first period when our civilization as a people began & how it has been effected.

The Cherokee Nation is bounded on the North by east Tennessee & North Carolina, east by Georgia, south by the Creek Nation & State of Alabama & west by west Tennessee. Its extreme length may be upwards of two hundred miles & extreme breadth about ~~two~~ ^{one} hundred — and a ^{thirty} rough conjecture, supposing it, to contain about ~~ten~~ millions acres of Land. This territory is divided by law into eight Districts or Counties, the boundaries of which are regularly designated and defined. A correct census of the Nation was taken last year (1825) by order of the National Council.

oil to ascertain the amount of property & taxable individuals within the Nation. The result proved to be 13,583 native citizens, 147- white men married with Indians & 73 white women do. & African Slaves 1,277 to which if we add 400 Cherokee who took Reservations in North Carolina not included in the census and who have since merged again among the Cherokee Nation will contain 15,480 inhabitants. There are a few instances of African mixture with Cherokee blood, whenever it is seen is considered in the light of misfortune & disgrace; but that of the white may be as to be occasioned by intermarriages which has been increasing in proportion to the march of civilization. This population is dispersed over the face of the Country on separate farms, & villages or a community possessing one piece, & local laws to govern the labor of the citizens, who acted in concert in cultivating their patches have disappeared long since, & to my knowledge there is but one of this character at Crosswattle, the inhabitants of which are gradually diminishing by emigration to the woods, where they prefer to clear the forest & govern their own plantations. In this view of their ~~location~~ location it readily appears that they are farmers & herdsmen, which is their real character. Personal distinctions & gradation in property has been & will be a primary feature in the character of Nations, from the rudest tribes -

that roam the forest, to those who have ascended⁶⁶
to the pinnacle of highest grandeur & intellect. So it
is with us, but it happily operates as a stimulus
for emulation, which gives force & accelerates the
wheels of our improvement.

Our Country is well adapted for the growth
of Indian Corn, Wheat, rye & oats, Irish &
Sweet Potatoes, which are cultivated by our
people. Cotton is universally raised for domestic
consumption & a few have grown it for market
and have realized very good profits. I take pleas-
ure to state that there is not to my knowledge
a solitary Cherokee to be found who depends
upon the chase for subsistence. Every head of
a family has his own farm house. The hardest
portion of manual labor is performed by the
men & women occasionally lend a hand in
the field, more by choice & necessity than any-
thing else. Justice is due to the females of the
poorer class of whom I now speak. Duties assigned
them by Nature as mothers or wives, are well attended
to, & cheerfully do they prepare our meals, & for
the family, they sew, they spin & weave & are in-
fact a valuable portion of our citizens. The afri-
can slaves are mostly held by Half breeds &
full blooded Indians of talents. The valuable
portion of property is retained in this class. They
have a few painted & Brick houses, but their houses
are usually constructed of hewed ~~logs~~ logs with-

brick chimneys & shingled roofs. Their furniture is better than the exterior of their buildings would induce a stranger to be here. Servants attend at their meals, & the same rules & etiquette is observed at table as in the first families of the whites. Every family in the Nation ~~Native~~ possesses hogs, cattle & horses, and a respectable number have begun to pay attention to the introduction of sheep, which are increasing very fast. The horse is in general use for purposes of Riding, drawing the plough or waggon. I am sorry that I have not with time, the estimate of the respective number of his property & their value, as well as the number of ploughs, teams, waggons, saw & grist mills &c. in the Nation. The females were the first who were induced to undertake domestic manufactures & they are still confined to them. These consist of white and striped homespun, coarse woollen Blankets and in many instances of very valuable and comfortable twilled and figured coverlets. Woollen & cotton stockings are manufactured in every family for domestic use. A great portion of Cherokee clothing is furnished from our own people and fancy goods, such as silks, calicoes, cambricks, ~~handkerchiefs~~ handkerchiefs & shawls &c. are introduced by Native merchants from the adjoining states. The principal portion of our trade consist in hogs & horned cattle. Skins -

Skins formerly were sold in respectable quantities, but that kind of trade is fast declining & becomes less reputable. Cherokees on the Tennessee river have already commenced to trade in cotton & grow it on large plantations, for which they have experienced flattering profit. Preparation is making by all those in good circumstances to cultivate the cotton for market, which will soon be a staple commodity of traffic for the Nation.

In giving you a view of the Nature of our Government you will be better able to ascertain the state of our improvement. Having been honored with a seat in its National Councils, I have better acquaintance with this branch of your enquiry than any other. All Indian Nations are divided into tribes, distinguished by different names; these are again subdivided into Towns. In each of these tribes & Towns are some men, prominent for humanity, wisdom & valor. The assemblage of such men forms their "Council fire". They are a standing body of chieftans, who are first in the war circle, and foremost in the deadly fight - they possess within themselves, Legislative, Judicial & Executive powers. The first law of Nature & of Indians is against murder. Retaliation & revenge is the prerogative of the

of the tribe, to whom the victim belongs, and the friends & relatives of the aggressor are compelled by law to remain neutral. This was a principle of Government, in the worst of shapes, of our people. Our chiefs were numerous & their accountability was small. Lands could then be obtained at a price most convenient to the United States, as their Commissioners with the assistance of the Agent could always procure a majority for acession & when this was done the patriotic chiefs had to yield^{ed} to secure their shares for the trifling equivalent. Savage ignorance saw its own folly, by the effects, which presented itself in a shape not to be misunderstood.

The tide of white population, was advancing on all sides & the Indians, poor in goods but well supplied with the vices of their neighbors were retreating to a given point, where they would eventually be crushed in the folds of the encroaching Serpent. The Remedy was within themselves, and this could only be applied successfully in the amendment of their Government. Usurers were stricken off. A National rat of their Government was selected & a State house was built and the chiefs organised themselves into a standing body of Legislators who annually—

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meet in October. They are composed of two de-
partments, the National Committee and Rep-
resentative Council the former consist of 13-
members including their President and have a-
clerk to record their proceedings - they control-
and regulate their funds - they have power to-
inspect the books of the Treasurer and acknowl-
edge claims and Legislate & regulate or conun-
with the proceedings in the other branch of the
Legislature. The Representatives have Legisla-
tive ^{powers} to fill vacancies in the National Commit-
tee, conun with or reject their acts, and in con-
junction with the committee elect their Head-
chiefs or executives, or expel them for misconduct.
Laws of course are passed in the usual way
of the adjoining states, which are at present writ-
ten in the English Language & commenced in
the style to wit. "Be it Resolved by the
National Committee and Council of the
Cherokee Nation". The members of our Legislative
Council are chosen, to represent the eight districts
as satisfactorily as possible, as circumstances will al-
low. Our Judiciary having less obstacles to enconun-
ter in rendering ^{it}, is more perfect than our Legis-
lature. It is independent. Possesses power to bring
any chief of any grade before its tribunal, try all
causes, pass sentence & enforce it. Every District has
a Court of Justice, over which the District Judge & his

circuit Judge presides, the latter having jurisdiction over two Districts. A jury is attached to each court, but are liable to ~~be~~ substitution in case a reasonable objection is made either by the plaintiff or defendant. The officers of the District such as Sheriffs, Marshals & Constables are compelled to attend their courts. All appeals are finally decided by the Supreme Court of the Nation which meets at every Session of the National Council at the same place, and has power to enact ~~the~~ ^{laws} which is not allowed to the District Courts.

As we are yet destitute of prisons, justice is quickly inflicted. A thief as soon as convicted & sentence passed is tied to the next tree and on the naked skin is impressed his receipt for release. We have not as yet many written laws, it being the policy of our Government to regulate itself to the capacity & state of improvement of our citizens. Most of the adjudications are founded in the spirit of Natural Law or common sense. A sketch of a few of the Laws are as follow.

- 1st Law to regulate our citizens agreeable to the Intercourse laws of the United States for the purpose of securing peace on the Frontier.
- 2^d. Prohibiting the introduction of ardent spirits by the whites. Penalty - confiscation.
- 3^d Regulating intermarriages with the whites, which makes it necessary for a white man to obtain a license and be married by a Gospel minister or some